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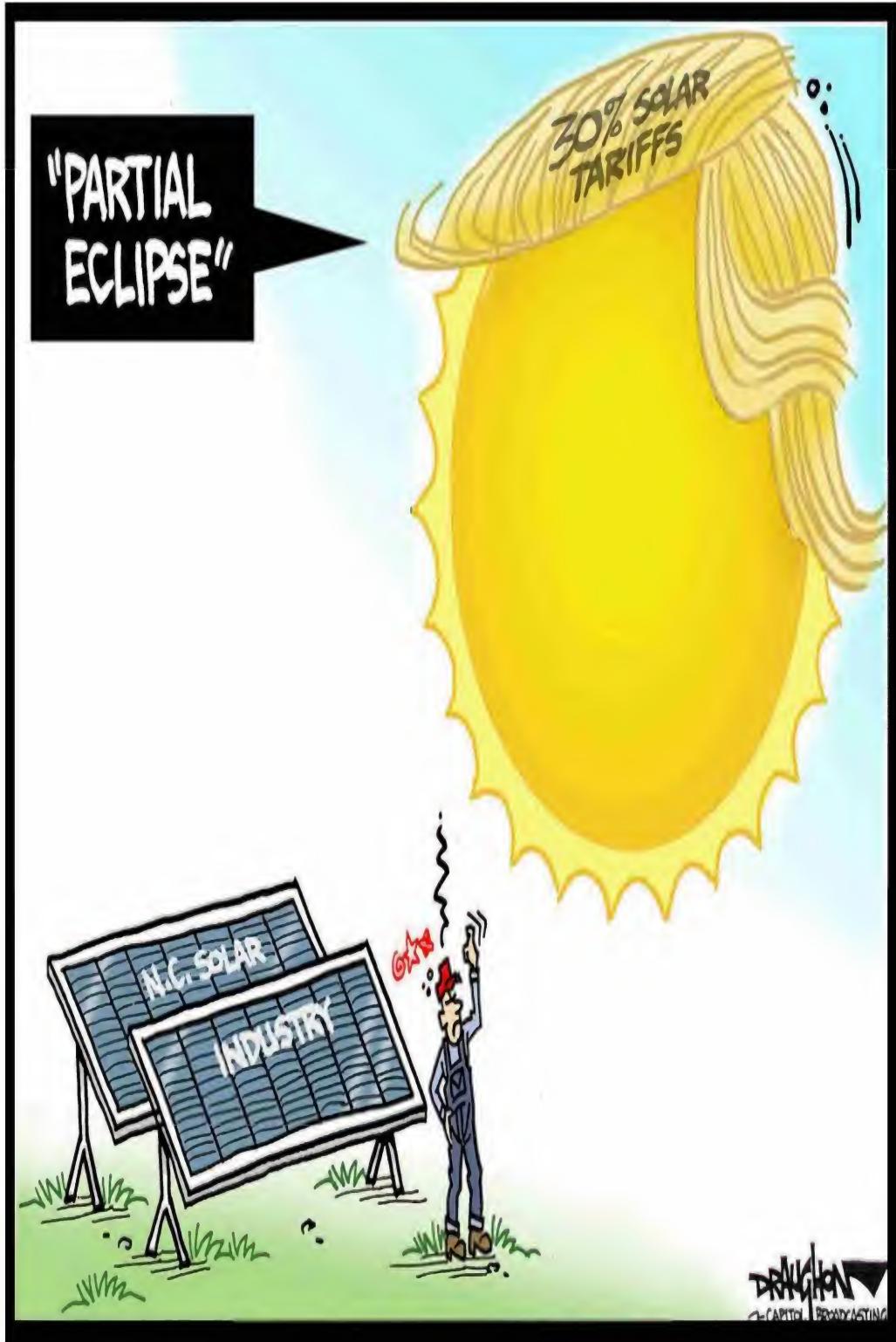
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Monday, Jan. 29, 2018



TODAY'S COLUMN

[PAUL FULTON & DAVID RICE: How investments in education pay off](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Paul Fulton is co-chair of the [Higher Education Works](#)

[Foundation](#) and David Rice is the executive director.

Chancellor Carol Folt refers to UNC Chapel Hill's medical/pharmaceutical research complex as "[a biomedical juggernaut](#)" – and others are starting to take notice of North Carolina's university-driven research economy as well.

The Information Technology & Innovation Foundation, for example, recently ranked North Carolina the top state in the nation for industry-funded university research.

"Leading states generally have strong research universities and at least a moderately robust advanced-industry economy with firms that benefit from more industrially relevant university research," the ITIF found.

["In addition, many of the leading states, such as Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio, and Utah have long had robust state-supported technology-commercialization programs ... which try to link industry and university research."](#)

Last August, for example, biopharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc. announced plans to invest \$100 million in manufacturing gene therapy products in Sanford based on technology developed at UNC Chapel Hill.

"Innovation drives economic opportunity and expansion," [NC Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland said at the time](#). "Pfizer's decision to expand in North Carolina proves how our investments in education pay off in new jobs and new solutions to the world's toughest challenges."

Similarly, the Milken Institute recently ranked Raleigh the second best-performing city in the nation in 2017. The California think tank credited NC State University with helping energize the region's tech economy.

"The university's Centennial Campus, which now houses more than 75 research centers and academic departments alongside a similar number of private, nonprofit, and government partners, expands the ability of academics and industry to collaborate and innovate," the report says.

"... Through co-op and internship programs, the school creates strong ties to local industry, and tightens the relationship between curriculum and career by introducing students early to real-world applications and challenges."

The report pointed to business-intelligence software firm SAS, as well as communications firm Bandwidth, as [prominent examples of companies that have benefited from NC State research](#). VF Corporation also recently announced a [strategic partnership with NC State focused on advances in textile research](#).

And that's just the public research universities – North Carolina's standing is undoubtedly enhanced by considerable industry-backed research performed at private universities Duke and Wake Forest.

We can't take any of these rankings for granted, though.

The ITIF noted that changes in state and federal policy in the 1980s help leverage industry support for research. As Raleigh pursues Amazon's \$5 billion

HQ2, [the News & Record of Greensboro notes](#) that continued state support is needed to "strengthen community college job-training programs and to maintain an excellent state university system."

Great universities don't spontaneously invent themselves. They need constant nurturing. And they do pay off – in jobs, in economic growth and in the ability to attract new industry.



Monday, Jan. 29, 2018 -- A round up of opinion, commentary and analysis. Partisan bickering in Washington, big money raising in N.C., NCAE disses the state schools chief and Trump's tariffs dim state clean energy economy's future.

POLICY & POLITICS

[SHERYL GAY STOLBERG & NICHOLAS FANDOS: As Gridlock Deepens in Congress, Only Gloom Is Bipartisan](#) (New York Times analysis) -- To some Democrats, midterm elections this November, once seen as a test for lunch-pail issues that could woo back white working-class voters, are now about nothing short of the future of pluralism and constitutional democracy. A Democratic victory would "erect a barricade against Trump, against a dangerous, reckless president and what else he might do," said Rep. David Price, D-NC, who taught

Democracy, he said, depends on checks and balances. "This is an absolutely critical test of whether we can do that."

[New work rules spur red state holdouts to launch bids to expand](#)

[Medicaid](#) (Washington Post analysis) -- If Republicans' efforts are successful, hundreds of thousands of Americans will be newly eligible for health coverage, while others could be dropped or have their benefits reduced. The effect would be a broadening of the program's reach but with a decidedly conservative bent.

[TRAVIS FAIN: Forest super-PAC brag as lawyers cringe](#) (WRAL-TV analysis) -- Other noteworthy findings from campaign finance records for the last six months of 2017 include Secretary of State Elaine Marshall's legal defense fund and Gov. Roy Cooper's flight time.

[STEVE PEOPLES: Kochs to Spend \\$20 Million to Promote Tax Overhaul](#) (AP news analysis) -- The political network backed by conservative industrialists Charles and David Koch plans to spend \$20 million to promote the tax overhaul recently signed into law by President Donald Trump. In addition to roughly 550 donors in attendance, the guest list featured a slate of Republican elected officials: Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., Freedom Caucus Chairman Rep. Mark Meadows, R- N.C., Sens. John Cornyn of Texas, and Todd Young of Indiana, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey and Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin.

[BOB PHILLIPS: This could be the year of reckoning for gerrymandering](#) (Fayetteville Observer column) -- For almost as long as our nation has existed, gerrymandering has plagued our democracy. Both Democrats and Republicans are guilty of manipulating voting districts for their own gain, too often leaving citizens without a real choice or a voice in our elections. But after 200 years of gerrymandering running rampant, 2018 could be the year we finally rein it in.

[Buncombe County's 'transparency' is still too opaque](#) (Asheville Citizen-Times) -- Buncombe County commissioners have insisted that this is a new day in our embattled county government, a new era of the utmost transparency in the wake of a federal investigation into former County Manager Wanda Greene "and others," in particular. Their record in handling public records requests by the Citizen Times, however, has been more opaque than their cheers might lead taxpayers to believe.

[CELIA RIVENBARK: Trump takes evangelicals for a ride](#) (Wilmington Star-News column) -- When I was a kid, anytime the Rev. Billy Graham's crusade was televised, we were expected to stop catching lightnin' bugs in mayonnaise jars -- the pastime of choice on a steamy Southern night and head inside. We would take our places on the oval, braided rug in front of the TV and dutifully absorb one hour of old time religion.

[Are Corporate Tax Cuts Raising Pay? Yes, for Bosses](#) (New York Times) -- Some big companies are talking up modest pay raises for workers. But most gains will go to executives and investors.

[HUNTER INGRAM: Conversation over NC's Confederate statues, including in Wilmington](#) (Wilmington Star-News analysis) -- If decision is made to move

[An affair with Trump? Haley, as a woman, unfairly faces different standards](#) (Charlotte Observer) -- Nikki Haley is being forced to answer questions that are beneath her about a rumored affair with Donald Trump.

[Seek middle ground on immigration policy](#) (Rocky Mount Telegram) -- A tepid sense of optimism began to grow last week over renewed prospects for immigration reform. Meetings between a bipartisan group of about 30 senators last week in Washington highlighted the spirit of consensus that appears to be building among many members of that chamber.

[MICHAEL GORDON: He got an \\$800 break in court. Others won't be as lucky](#) (Charlotte Observer analysis) -- Donations from Observer readers helped a Charlotte man avoid trial. But many poor defendants remain financially cut off from court programs they need.

EDUCATION

[KELLY HINCHCLIFFE: Breaking tradition, NCAE won't invite superintendent to convention due to teacher pay comments, other reasons](#) (WRAL-TV analysis) -- One day after N.C. Superintendent Mark Johnson sparked controversy by saying \$35,000 is a good starting salary for some young teachers, the NC Association of Educators announced it will not invite him to its annual convention this March, citing "many reasons." This marks the first time in 48 years the group has not invited a sitting state superintendent to speak.

[JANETTE PIPPIN: Meeting K-3 class size mandate remains a challenge](#) (Jacksonville Daily News analysis) -- As the current school year heads into its final months, Onslow County school and county officials are focused on the year ahead and the challenges to meet state K-3 class size requirements. Phasing in the mandate to reduce class sizes for the 2017-18 year was hard. Continuing the process next school year will be worse, said Board of Education Chairwoman Pam Thomas. For one of the fastest-growing school districts in the state, space is at a premium which leads to challenges finding room for additional classrooms at the kindergarten through third grade level, where growth is highest.

[Conway helped ensure ECSU's turnaround continues](#) (Elizabeth City Daily Advance) -- When Chancellor Thomas Conway announced out of the blue recently that he plans to retire at the end of May after only two years at the helm of Elizabeth City State University, we, like probably many others, immediately assumed the worst.

ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

[TIM WHITE: This is almost like fighting for buggy whips](#) (Fayetteville Observer column) -- Transitions are never easy. We don't glide smoothly from one era to the next. There are bumps in the road. Sometimes the bumps are more like Grand Canyons. We may be hitting one of those big ones now in our journey from the fossil-fuel economy to the Next Big Thing. It looked for a while that the transition was accelerating. Hundreds of new solar farms were sprouting across the country, especially here in North Carolina,

[Nix solar tariffs](#) (Winston-Salem Journal) -- President Trump's tariffs on solar

including many in North Carolina. He should reverse his decision.

[Solar tariff deals temporary blow to industry](#) (Fayetteville Observer) -- How do you claim to protect an industry when your actions will set it back for years? Where is the wisdom of imposing high tariffs to protect a few small manufacturers when you're also putting a roadblock in front of the market for that product? We don't expect answers to those questions anytime soon, because they'd require a level of honesty that we don't expect these days from White House policymakers.

[JIM MacRAE: Chemours neighbors need more state help](#) (Fayetteville Observer column) -- I am a Gray's Creek resident and own property within a mile of the Chemours chemical plant off N.C. 87 on the Bladen-Cumberland county line. I own a well that has been determined to have toxic levels of GenX in the water. Toxic, meaning you cannot drink it, brush your teeth with it, cook with it, make ice with it,

[LAUREN OHNESORGE: N.C. customer advocate calls for \\$289M rate cut at Duke Energy](#) (Triangle Business Journal analysis) -- While economic developers were celebrating Friday that state regulators had given the Atlantic Coast Pipeline permission to build in North Carolina, others, including Nash County farmer Marvin Winstead, were "very, very disappointed."

HEALTH

[KATE BOWLER: What to say when you meet the angle of death at a party](#) (New York Times column) -- Every 90 days I lie in a whirling CT machine, dye coursing through my veins, and the doctors look to see whether the tumors in my liver are growing. If they are not, the doctors smile and schedule another scan. The rhythm has been the same since my doctors told me I had stage IV colon cancer two and a half years ago. I live for three months, take a deep breath and hope to start over again. I will probably do this for the rest of my life. Whatever that means.

[TAYLOR KNOPF: Is That Rural Hospital Really Necessary?](#) (N.C. Health News analysis) -- A new study concludes rural communities may all not need a hospital. What does that mean for towns that may be losing those "anchor" facilities?

[JAMES MORRISON: Rapid Rise In NC Police Carrying Opioid Overdose Kits In All But Rural Counties](#) (WUNC-FM analysis) -- The drug naloxone has become key in saving lives from opioid overdoses. It's such a vital tool for fighting the opioid epidemic that many law enforcement officers in North Carolina now carry it with them at all times.

[JOHN RAILY: Standing at the gates of hell with Petty and others](#) (Winston-Salem Journal column) -- When the news broke last weekend that rock n' roll legend Tom Petty's death in October at the age of 66 was the result of an accidental drug overdose, North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein tweeted: "Fentanyl is killing more and more people in NC. It also killed Prince and Tom Petty."

... AND MORE

[Remarkable Life of Bayard Wootten](#) (New York Times analysis) -- In 1904, a photographer in North Carolina lent a 4×5 camera to a divorced single mother. He shook his head and muttered several times that she'd "never make the grade." One year later, he viewed her as his competitor and took back his equipment. So, Bayard (pronounced BY-ard) Wootten, who until then had supported her family by selling small paintings and drawings, went out and bought her own camera.

[ALLEN JOHNSON: Canada's merit immigration includes 's-hole' countries](#) (Greensboro News & Record column) -- As we were sitting in a theater last weekend, waiting to see "The Post," a trailer for the upcoming Marvel superhero movie, "Black Panther," flashed across the screen.

[ANDREW DUNN: As Charlotte battles social injustice, churches are stepping up to the plate](#) (Charlotte Agenda column) – In a city where nearly half the population attends church regularly, why is there such a social and economic divide? That is the question pastors and their congregations have been wrestling with since a national report put Charlotte dead last in economic mobility – and even more so since the fall 2016 protests that brought issues like affordable housing and unequal opportunity to the foreground.

[CATHERINE KOZAK: Palmetto-Peartree Preserve to Change Hands](#) (Coastal Review analysis) -- The neglected Palmetto-Peartree Preserve in Tyrrell County, a habitat for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, is in the process of being transferred to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

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